

INTRODUCTION

In 1996, the first archivist for the Photographic Archives created the first *Guide to California State Parks' Photographic Archives*. The *Guide* included general information about the Archives, a list of photograph albums and subjects, and a separate list of slides and slide subjects. The *Guide* also provided a list of song slides (frequently used for campfire programs) by title, and a list of plants and animals represented in the slide collection. In addition, the first *Guide* listed park research project binders by project, as well as multi-volume sets relating to specific projects, such as the gold rush.

The 1998 version of the *Guide to California State Parks' Photographic Archives* involves a change of format, the inclusion of previously undocumented photographic materials, and the addition of several indexes. All photographic materials, regardless of type, are gathered together in both the alphabetical and subject listings, so the user can look in one place to determine holdings on a particular park or theme. Subject terms were simplified and standardized, when possible, according to terms in the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*, and cross-references were added. Loose prints, which were never mounted in photo albums, were collected, inventoried, transferred to archival folders and boxes, and added to the indexes. The internal transfer of two large collections of aerial slides warranted a new, specific index, and new original photography has been integrated into both the slide and print collections. Finally, narratives relating to the history of the Photographic Archives, the scope of its holdings, and intellectual property rights issues have been added.

An exhaustive inventory of the Archives' holdings was undertaken as a preliminary step to revising the *Guide*. Because materials are housed in a variety of locations, according to format, several shelf lists were created as a by-product of the inventory effort. Photographic materials were examined and cleaned, conservation needs were noted, storage environments were adapted, and index discrepancies were corrected. Creating a new edition of the *Guide* also caused us to note the strengths and shortcomings of the collection, and gave staff a clear sense of direction towards adding to and improving the comprehensiveness of our holdings. In short, the effort behind this revision of the *Guide* has paid off in better access to the collection, and a clearer vision for the Archives staff.



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December 1998

HISTORY of the ARCHIVES

The Photographic Archives originated with the earliest advocates of a state park system--individuals who wanted to acquire and preserve lands reflecting the incredible beauty and diversity of our state. Documenting this diversity through photographs served to illustrate their cause and enlist public and legislative support. Many of the earliest photographs in the Archives depict huge virgin redwood stands, pristine lakes and rivers, and historically significant structures. Later photographs detail the growing and developing park structure: access roads, sewer lines, campgrounds and firepits, and ranger housing. Many photographs in this group highlight the contributions by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and were taken by photographers employed by the federally funded Work Projects Administration in the 1930's. Images from this era document public and legislative acceptance of the idea of land preservation for recreational use.

As the State of California continued to acquire park property, a growing workforce was needed for planning and stewardship. Many of the key archeologists, historians, naturalists, supervisors, and directors are represented in the collection through their photographic work. Of particular note are the contributions of Fred Meyer, Fritz Riddell, Norm Wilson, John Michael, Elmer Aldrich, Bud Heacox, Len Penhale, Leo Crawford, and innumerable others who helped provide a visual history of California State Parks. In general, these early photographs served a specific purpose: to document the state of the new acquisition. Later photographs document erosion, floods, fires, and other natural disasters. Construction and restoration work undertaken by park employees and volunteers is also recorded, creating a unique photographic record of the Department's developing environmental focus and planning priorities.

California State Parks acquired its first official photographer in the 1960's. Gene Russell focused on copying historical photograph collections held at local parks, documenting new park acquisitions, and working on exhibit and audiovisual projects. As park holdings continued to grow, so did the photographic record, which was to become the Archives. Collection control became more centralized, numbering systems were developed and refined, and selected images were mounted into photograph albums. Park employees in the field began sending their film to the Photo Files Unit in downtown Sacramento to be developed. Photographs relating to the history of a particular area were borrowed and copied. Clearly, a central location was needed to house and preserve the growing collection of original images, negatives, and copy work generated by the Department, and to provide access to this valuable information resource. In 1976, the Photo Files Unit moved to a new location in West Sacramento, along with the exhibit shop and other related offices.

Until 1991, the Office of Interpretive Services, housed in the same facility as the Photo Lab, served to create meaningful interpretive programs for park visitors, and to

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publicize California's natural and cultural resources to the public-- often drawing upon the photographic resources held in the developing Photographic Archives. With the Department's reorganization in 1991, the majority of these interpretive efforts became a local or district responsibility, but the photographs acquired, created, or used in interpretive efforts remained with the Photographic Archives. Fundamentally, the Archives holdings reflect the spirit and the efforts of an organization devoted not only to maintaining, and preserving California's abundant resources, but to interpreting them for the greater understanding of the public as well.

The Photographic Archives became an official entity of the Interpretation Section in 1991, and provides a secure, controlled environment for the Department's photographic images, both historical and contemporary. Consisting of prints, negatives, glass plates, lantern slides, color slides, and supplementary research files, the Archives continues to grow and assist staff in planning restorations, creating interpretive programs, and documenting concessions and visitor activities. In addition, the Archives serves as a valuable information resource for students and scholars, as well as the casual interested user. The Archives maintains a dynamic acquisition program, adding to its contemporary holdings through the original work of a full time staff photographer, and adding to its historical holdings by accepting and housing images previously held in park units and by individuals.



Self-portrait of Gene Russell, first professional photographer employed by the Department of Parks and Recreation. ©California State Parks, 1978.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Photographic Archives is home to approximately 150,000 images depicting the natural and cultural resources of California State Parks. Holdings consist of about 100,000 prints and negatives in black and white and color, about 35,000 color and black and white slides in 35mm format, and a small number of lantern slides and glass plates. The photographs were taken between 1900 and the present, with the majority taken between 1950 and 1985. In addition, there is a large collection of copy photography reflecting works created as early as 1839. Materials in 35mm slide format tend to be more contemporary in nature, dating between 1970 and the present.

The photographic materials depict a wide range of subjects. From the early days of the gold rush to west coast immigration, the movement of the population into California is depicted. The growth and development of the State Park System is documented, beginning with the acquisition of Big Basin Redwoods State Park in 1902; photographs reveal the construction of access roads, campgrounds, restrooms, sewers, and visitor centers, often using Civilian Conservation Corps and inmate workers. Unique natural resources are recorded, including lakes, mountains, flora, and fauna; cultural resources are also documented, including buildings, artifacts, landscapes, and restoration and preservation efforts. Natural disasters, such as fires and floods, oil spills and erosion, are also depicted in the photograph collection. The Archives also contains images of people over nearly a century of fishing, swimming, camping, eating, talking, hiking, biking, and relaxing in California's wonderful state parks.

Among the print collections, several groups of materials stand out. The Hearst School of Mines Collection consists of approximately 6,000 glass lantern slides, which have been copied and mounted into photo albums. Once used as teaching aides for the mining school at the University of California, Berkeley, these images document the equipment and processes used for mining gold and other minerals. Another major collection consists of prints made from lantern slides of Angel Island in the early 1900's, which record the variety of cultural groups arriving at the immigration and quarantine station. Highlights of the H.C. Peterson Collection include images of Sacramento's Hobo Jungle in the 1930's, California missions, and historic gold mining towns. This collection, consisting of several hundred prints made from glass and nitrate negatives, was compiled by the first curator of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park.

Although every park is represented in the slide collection, some units are more comprehensively depicted than others. Angel Island State Park, La Purisima Mission State Historic Park, Folsom Lake State Recreational Area, and Monterey State Historic Park have over 300 slides each, while some parks have only a few slides. The Archives is strong in images of park personnel and park interpretive activities, such as environmental living programs and junior rangers. One significant collection of slides is composed of aerial photographs taken by Jim Woodward, park planner and archeologist, and the late Jim

Tryner, Chief of the Resource Protection Division. The slides were created to assist park personnel in planning land acquisitions, designing projects, evaluating resources, and training Department staff. The aerial photography collection consists of about 6000 slides spanning a time period of 1970 to 1995, and represents almost all 265 park units.

Over the last thirty years, interpretive staff worked on a variety of park-specific projects, and compiled the graphic elements of their research into binders that are now held at the Archives. These binders, consisting of both original photography and photographs gathered from other institutions, form a valuable reference tool. For example, images of early adobe tile and brick construction were gathered by Mary Helmich and Richard Clark, State Park Interpreters, in preparation for the restoration of La Casa de Estudillo at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Of particular note in the reference collection is a 20-volume set of binders relating to the gold rush, including mining processes, milling and refining technology, and life in the gold fields.

Materials in the Archives are housed according to format. Many of the earliest photographs were dry mounted into photo albums and usually have brief inscriptions and a numbering system. Unbound prints are housed in archival folders and boxes and contain both unique and duplicate images. Negatives are stored separately from prints, and all information accompanying both negatives and prints is transcribed onto the catalog records and retained.

The Photographic Archives maintains an active photography laboratory and continually adds images to the collection. The staff photographer regularly travels to park units to bolster the Archives' holdings through both original and copy photography. In addition, the Archivist is available to evaluate the conservation needs of photographic materials held in field units, and to appraise materials for potential addition to the collection.

USING THE INDEXES

Like most collection finding aids, the *Guide to California State Parks Photographic Archives* was developed for two reasons: first, to harness internal control over an active and changing collection; and second, to assist users of the archives in locating relevant materials easily and efficiently. The primary access to images in the collection is by park unit. For the purposes of this index, parks are listed alphabetically, and include both “classified” and “unclassified” units. In addition, internal units within the State Park System, underwater areas, unnamed and unclassified, trail and non-trail properties not intended for classification, units and properties that have changed their identities, and units/properties formerly owned by the Department are included in the *Guide*.

The Park Index lists the current official form of the park name. Former, variant, and proper names are listed alphabetically, and refer the user to the proper name of the park. Internal classified units within parks, as well as unclassified significant structures and areas, are listed alphabetically and refer the user to the larger unit. For example, the entry for the Tijuana Estuary Natural Preserve refers the user to Border Field State Park, and the entry for the Custom House refers the user to Monterey State Historic Park. Within the main entry, materials that relate to specific areas and structures are listed in parentheses. Also listed in the Park Index are former park properties that have been transferred out of the California State Park System and are now under local or federal control.

The Subject Index integrates the most commonly requested materials under subject headings originally created by Department staff. Subject terms such as “Erosion” and “Equestrian Trails” will lead the user to images regardless of which specific unit they exist in. The Plant Index is arranged “dictionary” style, integrating Latin and common names. The Animal Index reflects the taxonomical physical arrangement of the slides, and also includes a common name and location guide. The Song Title listing is arranged alphabetically, and assists users in finding common campfire songs for interpretive programs. The number of slides required per song is noted next to the title.

The Aerial Photography Index lists the large collection of aerial slides, arranged geographically from north to south within each district. The order of the districts is also geographical, beginning in the interior, north to south, then coastal, finally low desert, and then the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation districts. Aerial photographs may also be found in the slide collection and the print collection under the name of the individual park unit.

Park units with an asterisk next to their name are represented in the Department's image database. As of December 1999, approximately 27,000 images have been scanned and cataloged as part of the Department's ongoing conservation efforts. Images exist in

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both compressed (JPEG) and full resolution (TGA) formats and, except for contrast and brightness modifications, have received no cosmetic alterations. Images were cataloged using Argus, the Department's statewide artifact cataloging software, adapted for image use.

The following abbreviations relate to the specific classification for each unit.

SB: State Beach
SP: State Park
SHF: State Historic Farm
SHM: State Historical Monument
SHP: State Historic Park
SR: State Reserve
SRA: State Recreation Area
SS: State Seashore
SVRA: State Vehicular Recreation Area
WC: Wayside Campground

In addition, the following abbreviations relate to specific subunits of a classified unit.

SW: State Wilderness
NP: Natural Preserve
CP: Cultural Preserve

COPYRIGHT AND REPRODUCTION

Copyright is a form of legal protection provided by Title 17, U.S. Code, to the creators of original works, including photographs. Copyright dates from the moment a work is created in tangible format, and includes the rights of reproduction, adaptation, distribution, performance, and exhibit. Fair use privileges afforded to libraries and archives allows for reference use and reproduction of most of the copyrighted materials held at the Photographic Archives.

The majority of images held in the Photographic Archives were taken by park employees in the course of Department work. The Department holds the copyright to these images and reproduces them for reference or scholarly use for a minimal charge. Commercial use of these images may involve a slightly higher reproduction fee, as well as a license fee.

A significant portion of the collection consists of copies of historic photographs held at individual park units or district offices. Many of these images are now in the public domain and unprotected by copyright regulations. Reproduction fees and use permit fees are charged for public domain images held at both the Archives and at the individual park units.

Over the course of many years, the Archives gathered reference copies of images held by a variety of individuals and agencies. While the Archives will provide a reference copy of these photographs to individuals, those wishing to obtain copies for commercial use are referred to the source agency for permission.

Due to limited staffing, it is advisable to make an appointment prior to visiting the Photographic Archives. Black and white printing, color slide duplication, and copy work is done onsite in the Photo Lab, while most color print work is sent out to a local company. Four weeks lead-time is requested for work that must be sent out; work that can be done in the Photo Lab can usually be completed in a week. The Archives does not loan or rent photographic materials.

For further information, please contact either Bob Young (Photographer) or Victoria Yturralde (Archivist) at (916) 324-6953 or (916) 324-7001, or write

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